

Vulture conservation: Resolutions passed to restrict mining, quarrying near habitats

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The conference aimed at promoting raptor research and conservation by exchange of scientific knowledge, training of researchers and networking of member countries.

From identifying vulture-breeding sites and protecting them, devising strategies like limited production of diclofenac that causes kidney failure in some of the vulture species, permitting safe drugs, and expanding the network of vulture safe zones were among the resolutions passed at the first-ever 'International Raptor Conference – ARRCN, India' organised at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (IISER) from February 6-9.

The conference, organised by Ela Foundation and the Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network (ARRCN), Japan, was attended by 240 delegates from 20 countries, including the USA, UK, Japan, Russia and India, who presented 132 scientific papers.

The resolutions focused on conservation of vultures by restricting mining, quarrying, developmental and recreational activities near vulture roost and nest sites, recognising the threat to raptors from electrocution and implementing safety measures, investigating the negative effects of pesticides on raptors, banning the use of 'manja' for kite flying in view of the risks it poses to raptors and other birds, and revision of the conservation status of Indian diurnal and nocturnal raptors.

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Satish Pande, organising secretary of the conference, said since raptors or birds of prey are at the apex of the food chain and indicate the quality of habitats, their study is important.

The conference was inaugurated by raptor researcher Rishad Naoroji. The archival book 'Falconry in the Land of the Blackbuck – Shyenavinod', written by Dr Satish Pande and Dr Suruchi Pande, was also released at the meet. The Department of Posts, India released a special cover to commemorate ARRCN.

As part of the conference, two field visits were conducted where delegates were shown conservation efforts of Ela Foundation for the endangered Indian white-rumped vulture and long-billed vulture with community participation. The delegates were shown the active breeding colonies of these vultures along with several other raptor species in India.

Source:

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